

## THE PREPAREDNESS LEAGUE OF AMERICAN DENTISTS.—ITS OBJECT AND WORK.

By C. L. Storms, Buffalo, N. Y.

(Read before the Fourth District Dental Society, Schenectady, N. Y.)

**A**LL men are not agreed as to the real purpose or value of preparedness as applied to our country in case of defense, but however men may differ on military preparedness, I am sure we are unanimous and united on any project that will make our profession more co-operative, efficient and serviceable to humanity.

Somewhat of the ideals, motives and purposes of the League you have gleaned from the many dental periodicals that have come to you during the past eight months, but in order that you may get a clearer conception of the movement and the reason of its appeal for your support, would say that the origin of the League took place last March. The impulse was purely a patriotic one, a keen and overwhelming desire on the part of the originators to arouse a fiery zeal among the men of our profession, to the point where they could be enlisted to give somewhat of their services and ability to the Government, in preparing the mouths of possible recruits to meet army requirements for enlistment.

It was a known fact that hundreds of young men, who were anxious to enlist, were being turned down because of a deficiency of the masticatory apparatus, for the reason that they had not the means themselves to have proper dental services rendered to put themselves into shape to meet Army requirements, and the Government having no facilities to take care of them, meant a great loss of available and worthy men.

Right here I want to say that the purpose of the League has been misunderstood by some. Dr. Ottolengui raised

the question whether or not the League was compromising and pauperizing the Government? Not at all. The Government will not accept gratuitous service, which means that after a man has enlisted and has been accepted into the service of the Government, the Government will take care of him and be responsible for his maintenance and keep.

We had no thought of the man after enlistment, but we did desire to assist the fellow who was willing to come to the defense of his Country and put him in shape to meet the dental requirements.

The hearty and co-operative response furnished the incentive to go further and suggested the possibility of organizing in the various cities, Section Units or Study Clubs, thru which a course of study could be instituted and the various branches of Dental and Oral War Surgery could be taken up in a comprehensive manner and the requisites of the Dental and Oral War Surgeon in war times thoroly comprehended and understood.

From the very beginning of the war, our foremost thinkers and educators have realized the need of concentrating upon some system that would bring the American dentist to the realization of the part he would be compelled to play in case our country should be thrown into the throes of war. The Preparedness League of American Dentists is the logical solution of the whole question. Its motto or slogan is,—“Of the Profession, for the Profession and for Our Country, if need be.” And that, together with the other thought, to give our country the best and most efficient Dental Corps in the world,

is sufficient to inspire every man who has real blood in him to back this to the utmost of his ability.

The League, at the suggestion of Major Robert Noble of the Surgeon General's Department of the United States Army, undertook a canvass of the various State and Component Societies of the National Dental Association to get a complete and accurate list of the oral surgeons in the United States. Our reports, up to date cover about three-fourths of the canvass and very few additions will be made to that list. Out of a membership of twenty thousand dentists furnished by the secretaries of the various societies, not more than thirty, strictly speaking, oral surgeons have been found or reported to us.

This canvass reveals to us a deplorable state of affairs and one hardly believable by the most pessimistic. The oral surgeon is in reality a myth or misnomer and the field of the oral surgeon is fast ebbing away from the profession. Ninety-five per cent of the Oral Surgery in the United States is being done by the General Surgeon, who, you must admit is far less familiar with the oral cavity than the dentist.

This canvass has also impressed us with the need of a wider horizon and the necessity of having the duties and requirements of the Oral Surgeon definitely and clearly defined. It has also awakened the profession to the need of post graduate courses for the seasoned practitioner, as a means to greater efficiency, skill and scholastic standing.

I wish particularly to call your attention to the statistics of Dr. Belcher in Oral Hygiene, January, 1917, issue, of the educational standing of the dentists in this country and then ask yourselves this question,—If we do not bestir ourselves to bring such changes into the profession as will improve and lift us into higher planes of thought and endeavor, what shall be the result?

At the sectional meeting of the Pre-

paredness League held under the auspices of the National Dental Association at its meeting last July at Louisville, Ky., one of the senior ranking dental surgeons of the United States Army in his address emphatically stated that the dental profession has relatively no oral surgeons and that if we, as a profession, did not accept the opportunity afforded thru the plans of the League, the medical profession will, in consequence, control the field of oral surgery and we can never thereafter, as a profession, occupy our rightful place. All dentists recognize the fact that we have not assumed the position our great profession offers. We have rather contributed to the mechanical principal and practice, while the surgical and therapeutic side has been practically left untouched. In other words, dental and oral surgery and therapeutics should form the basis of the superior structure of the activities of the dental profession and all else should be a corollary to the main proposition.

As a scientific proposition we have developed the mechanical to a nicety and left to the medical profession and manufacturing agents to instruct us in the many branches of research investigation and therapeutics, which, had we developed thru the surgical field, would have placed us in the fore as a natural result of experience, investigation and skill. This, we believe, may be adjusted thru the earnest activities and co-operation with the plans of the League.

That the purposes of the League meet with the general approval of the profession there can be no doubt, for we are in receipt of letters from the foremost men of the profession, approving the formation of the Sectional Units and a prescribed course of post graduate study, which will evenuate in the formation of the best and most scientific Dental Corps in the world.

Two of our most prominent Deans of Dental Colleges in the United States remarked to the Chairman of the League

that the work of the League would evenuate in a comprehensive course of study in oral surgery in all dental institutions in our Country.

The League, sensing the responsibilities that the American dentist would have to assume in case of war, and realizing his serious lack of unpreparedness, proposes a synopsis of a study course which can be taken up by the various Sectional Units, whereby general information can be obtained and where the more ambitious and studious can carry it out in more minute detail. The object of the League is to restore to the Dental Profession the field of Oral Surgery and have our profession ready when our Country calls, whether in times of peace or war. In other words to establish a post graduate course of instruction for the mature dentist in specialized work.

Quoting from an editorial by Dr. Edward C. Kirk, in the December Cosmos, he says: "It has been demonstrated that while the service of the dentist in war hospitals is an indispensable service the training afforded him by the dental school plus his training derived from experience of private or ordinary hospital practice, are, together not sufficient to fully equip him for efficient service in dealing with the cases with which he is confronted in a modern war hospital and that to efficiently solve the surgical problems there presented, the dentist needs a specialized training; the means for acquiring which are not as yet available in any adequate degree. It is true that practice as an interne in a modern war hospital furnishes the best type of training in the "hard school of experience" but it must be borne in mind that a hospital is not primarily nor essentially a school, but is a humanitarian institution where the sick and injured should receive the best care and attention that the centers of education can supply.

It is this fundamental educational need that has inspired the Preparedness

League of American Dentists to suggest the establishment of Sectional Units thruout the country. These units are to be organized under the supervision of groups of specialists who will direct the studies of those who wish to prepare themselves to meet in a practical and efficient way, the growing demand for competent dental and oral surgeons in State and National Army Service."

We wish to emphasize Dr. Kirk's thought that the hospital is a place where the sick and injured must receive our best service and not furnish a school of experimental training for the dentist as would develop did we not prepare him thru the means offered by the League, to fulfill the highest mission and usefulness of our profession.

The Government has been deeply interested in the work of the League and fully appreciates all that is being done to instruct the profession in Dental and War Oral Surgery. Major Noble of the Surgeon Generals' Department, has practically acknowledged that it must depend upon the efforts of the Preparedness League to fill the Officers' Reserve Corps of the Dental Section with capable and representative men.

Perhaps just a word regarding the Officers' Reserve Corps of the Dental Section might not be amiss. Under the new law those desiring to enlist in the Dental Section will do so under the commission of First Lieutenant and possible advance to that of Major. A salary of Two Thousand Dollars a year is allowed when in active service, together with headquarters and incidentals. This strictly speaking, is a paper commission and the dentist will be called on for compulsory service only in case of actual war. I understand there is neither number or age limit.

This gives us a splendid opportunity to serve our Country in the most useful way possible and surely we all would prefer to be commissioned and follow our field of endeavor, rather than being

drafted as a private. Hence the League feels justified in promulgating the movement to give our Government the largest best equipped and most representative Dental Corps of any Nation in the world. Your individual effort and support will make this an actuality, which will redound to the credit and glory of the greatest of all professions.

We wish it correctly understood that the Preparedness League of American Dentists is affiliated with the National Dental Association, thru an Advisory Committee, appointed as per a resolution of the Association, which is composed of Dr. L. L. Barber, President of the National Dental Association; Dr. E. C. Kirk, Dean of the University of Pennsylvania, Dental Department; Dr. H. E. Friesell, Dean of the University of Pittsburgh; Dr. H. L. Wheeler, College of Oral and Dental Surgeons, New York City, and Dr. S. D. Boak, Dental Corps, United States Army.

This Board will act on all matters of importance in conjunction with the Board of Trustees and Committee on Organization, consisting of Dr. T. P. Hinman of Atlanta, Ga.; Dr. Otto U. King, Huntington, Ind.; Dr. F. W. Low, Buffalo, N. Y., and Dr. H. P. Burkhardt, of Batavia, N. Y., Trustees. Committee on Organization Dr. J. W. Beach, Dr. H. A. Pullen and Dr. M. B. Eshleman, all of Buffalo, N. Y.

The Journal of the National Dental Association will be the official organ of the League, which will each month contain all matters relative to the Sectional Units and a synopsis of the course of study from month to month. This course is being standardized under the supervision of Dr. Kirk and the Faculty of the University of Pennsylvania, together with the foremost dental educators of the country.

In a recent interview with Dr. Kirk, the Chairman suggested that he standardize the course of training or study of the League and make the great Evans Research Institute, the fountain head of

research and post graduate school of instruction for the mature practitioner, to which Dr. Kirk readily assented and is utilizing the wonderful resources of the splendid faculty of the Dental Department of the University of Pennsylvania for this purpose.

This, I believe, fully explains the object and purpose of the League, the status of the same and the necessity of its appeal to you to assist in restoring to the profession its true aim and fullness of its usefulness to humanity.

We want a Sectional Unit in every city or locality where it is possible and in order to organize the same, we must first become an active member of the parent organization. The fee is One Dollar and is paid at once. This is merely to provide for postage, printing and other incidental expenses, unless when the permanent organization is perfected in New York City, when it might be decided to have a stipulated yearly fee.

The Sectional Unit being local, its character is regulated according to the wishes of its members and the fee is usually One Dollar, which may be paid yearly but this must be governed accordingly to your need.

The League being an affiliated body of the National Dental Association makes it imperative that we take no one outside of that membership. This is to be regretted in a way, yet it is necessary in order to carry out our aims and purposes.

You may feel that your territory is limited for a Sectional Unit. It is not necessary to depend upon numbers. It will be your enthusiasm, devotion and loyalty rather than men which will ultimately spell success. You will be surprised at the latent talent developed among your own members and gratified at the earnest and hearty co-operation of the medical fraternity, who will deem it a favor to assist and instruct you in every possible way. It is the need of this kind of co-operation among ourselves and a better understanding with the med-

ical fraternity that is required to fully equip us to meet the rising emergency of our profession.

It has been said that we are inadequately educated as a body of men to meet the great responsibilities daily en-

veloping us from the standpoint of oral surgery. Let us grasp this great opportunity to make ourselves "Worthy of the hire." There is no other solution and quoting in the words of the vallant knight of old, "By this sign we conquer."

---

## MILITARY TRAINING.

---

**By Howard H. Gross, Chicago, Ill., President of Universal Military Training League.**

---

**W**ORLD conditions are so unsettled no one can savely forecast the future even for a few weeks. We may at any time be forced into war. The likelihood of this decreases in proportion to our ability to defend ourselves. On the contrary, the weaker we are the greater the danger is. This is so clear that it requires no argument. As a people we abhor war, we will do anything honorable to avoid it.

But a situation may easily and speedily arise where we must fight or crawl. The fact that we are peaceful does not insure us peace. Belgium and Servia were both peaceful and peace-loving, but they were driven into war and then both countries were laid waste.

War as now conducted in ruthless and cruel beyond description. It is a combination of men, machinery and chemicals. It is fought on land, in the air, on sea and under sea.

Only those trained to modern warfare can be of use in defending the country. In Revolutionary days General Lee of Washington's army when war was comparatively simple said: "A nation is a murderer which sends its own citizens uninformed and uninstructed into war." This was true then and it is true with emphasis today. A government of the people and by the people presupposes a fair and equitable adjustment of duties

and obligations. It does not mean that some shall serve while others shirk. but it means a rule of the majority and the service of all.

Why should patriotic George fight to protect shirker Bill? Nothing is fairer than the proposal that, as the flag protects all, it is the duty of all to defend it.

We insure our houses and barns against fire because they may burn. Why should we not insure our national peace? There is only one way to do so and that is by being ready and strong enough to meet any emergency. Strength thru preparation means peace.

Uncle Sam will never engage in aggressive warfare. The people would not have it. Have we any assurance whatever that we shall be immune from attack? It may come from the Atlantic but more likely from the Pacific. The oceans, as Dr. Eliot, President Emeritus of Harvard University, says, are no longer barriers of defense, but highways over which ships hostile or friendly may come. His conclusions are that national safety lies in prompt and adequate preparation for defense against invasion.

Any one of four countries of Europe and at least of Asia could in thirty to sixty days successfully land a seasoned and fully equipped army of 200,000 or more upon our shores, and double the number within a few weeks.